

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 02290 171610Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SAA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SES-02 /080 W
-----125075 181910Z /47

R 171530Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1561
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 2290

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, XF, IS, JO
SUBJECT: WEST BANK VIEWS-HIKMAT AL-MASRI

1. NABLUS NOTABLE HIKMAT AL-MASRI TOLD ME AUGUST 17 THAT
INORDER FOR CAMP DAVID TO BE A SUCCESS,
ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TO GIVE A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO
WITHDRAW FROM WEST BANK/GAZA AT THE END OF AN
INTERIM PERIOD. SUCH A DECLARATION, HE SAID, WOULD
HAVE TO BE CLEARER THAN RES 242. IF THIS WERE DONE, THEN
PALESTINIANS LIVING UNDER OCCUPATION WOULD APPROACH ARAFAT AND
URGE THE PLO TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AND ENTER
INTO NEGOTIATIONS. IN EVENT PLO UNABLE TO TAKE THIS
STEP, THEN PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THEIR OWN DECISION. COMMITMENT
TO WITHDRAW WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY BAN ON ALL FURTHER
SETTLEMENTS.
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 02290 171610Z

2. AL-MASRI IS PESSIMISTIC BEGIN CAN BE PERSUADED TO
MOVE THE DISTANCE REQUIRED INORDER TO ENABLE NEGOTIATIONS
TO CONTINUE. HE CHARACTERIZED DAYAN'S KNESSET STATEMENT
FOLLOWING LEADS AS "ONE PERCENT OF THE NECESSARY."
HE DESCRIBED BEGIN AS A "FOOL" (I BELIEVE HE
MEANT "FANATIC") WHO HAD UNILATERALLY CHANGED ISRAEL'S

LONG-STANDING POSITION ON RESOLUTION 242.

3. I NOTED THAT ALL THREE PARTICIPANTS AT CAMP DAVID WERE ON RECORD AS FAVORING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND THAT ALL HAD A GREAT INTEREST IN ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME. IN DIPLOMACY, CREATIVE AMBIGUITY WAS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO BRIDGE POSITIONS AND PAVE THE WAY OR NEGOTIATIONS. I EXPLAINED THAT THE US COULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATIONS.

4. AL-MASRI CRITICIZED THE ASWAN FORMULA AS INADEQUATE SINCE IT SPOKE ONLY OF PALESTINIANS PARTICIPATING IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR FUTURE. THIS MEANT THAT THERE WOULD BE OTHER PARTICIPANTS, NAMELY ISRAELIS, WHO WOULD EXERCISE A VETO.

5. WHEN DISCUSSING BOUNDARIES, AL-MASRI SAID IN EXCHANGE FOR WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINIANS WERE WILLING TO MAKE THE "TREMENDOUS CONCESSION" OF ACCEPTING THE 1967 LINES. THIS WOULD GIVE ISRAEL 80 PERCENT OF MANDATORY PALESTINE. AL-MASRI WONDERED HOW BEGIN COULD SQUARE HIS DECLARATION GOI WOULD NEVER RETURN TO 1967 LINES WITH STATEMENTS THAT EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE NOT SURPRISED AT AL-MASRI'S POSITION ON BOUNDARIES WHICH HE HAS CONSISTENTLY ESPOUSED. WHAT
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PAGE 03 JERUSA 02290 171610Z

IS INTERESTING IS HIS HINT THAT IF GOI GIVES UNAMBIGUOUS COMMITMENT OF WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW AT END OF INTERIM PERIOD, HE AND OTHERS WOULD BE WILLING TO GO AHEAD, EVEN WITHOUT PLO UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. SEE ALSO JERUSALEM 1999.

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